

REMARKS

The Office Action of September 13, 2000 has been received and its contents carefully noted.

Revisions To The Application

The present Amendment revises the title, as required in Section 1 of the Office Action. The new title is "Semiconductor Integrated Circuit Having Transistor With Reduced Resistance."

The present Amendment also revises the specification and abstract to adapt them to U.S. practice and correct inadvertent informalities. Among the informalities that have been corrected are those identified in Section 2 of the Office Action (except that "Fig. 4," at line 6 on page 3, has been changed to --Figs. 4-A and 4-B,-- and a similar modification has been made for Figure 6 at line 8 on page 3).

The informalities that have been corrected also include divergent terminology. For example, the application originally spoke of connections between layers as being provided by both "contacts" and "contact holes." This divergence would not have caused an ordinarily skilled person any problems, since he or she would undoubtedly have recognized that the contacts between conductors in different layers occur at holes in insulation between the layers, but for the sake of improved consistency, the present Amendment changes "contact holes" to --contacts--.

The revisions to the specification also include a sentence added on page 1 to identify the source of the related art shown in Figures 4-A and 4-B, as requested in Section 5 of the Office Action.

The specification has also been amended to refer explicitly to "conductors" in the polysilicon layer and the metal layer.

The present Amendment also cancels claims 1 and 2, amends the remaining original claims, and adds new claims 16-21 to further protect the invention. The claims will be discussed in more detail later in these remarks.

Finally, it is noted that a paper entitled "Proposed Drawing Changes" is being filed concurrently. Among other things, it designates Figures 4-A and 4-B as prior art, as suggested in Section 4 of the Office Action.

The Allowed Claims

The allowance of claims 6-15 has been noted with satisfaction. Nevertheless, these claims have been amended to improve their form under U.S. practice and to correct inadvertent informalities. Among other improvements, the previously used contact "hole" terminology has been dropped in favor of, simply, "contacts." Furthermore, the previously used "conductive layers" are now referred to as "conductors," for the sake of improved conformity to the specification (which describes a polysilicon layer with conductors for the drain and the source and a metal layer with conductors for the drain and the source).

Another revision that is worthy of note involves the format of independent claim 14 and several of the dependent claims. Claim 14, for example, has been revised by placing some of the recitations in sub-paragraph form to emphasize their subordinate relationship to the recitations in paragraph form.

It is believed that the revisions to claims 6-15 improve these claims without undermining their allowability over the prior art.

Oath/Declaration

A Supplemental Declaration to correct the typographical error in the filing date of the Japanese priority application, noted in Section 3 of the Office Action, is attached. It has been executed by only two of the three co-inventors, though. The third co-inventor, Mr. Umezawa, is no longer employed by the Assignee of the present application, and his whereabouts are unknown. A Petition under 37 CFR 1.183 to waive the rules, so as to accept the Substitute Declaration without Mr. Umezawa's signature, is being filed concurrently (see Section 603 of the MPEP).

The Rejections Under 35 USC 112

Section 6 of the Office Action rejects claims 3-5 under the first paragraph of 35 USC 112, the Examiner pointing out an oversight in claim 3. Since the present Amendment corrects this oversight, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn. The Examiner is thanked for his vigilance in detecting this problem so that it could be corrected.

Section 7 of the Office Action rejects claims 1, 4, and 5 for indefiniteness. Since claim 1 has been canceled, the rejection is now moot with respect to this claim. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that the correction of claim 3 avoids the conflict that was previously present with claim 4, so that the rejection of claim 4 for indefiniteness has also been overcome.

The New Claims

Section 9 of the Office Action rejects claims 1 and 2 for obviousness on the basis of Ando in view of Narita. While this rejection is now moot, in view of the cancellation of claims 1

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and 2, it is appropriate at this point to briefly explain why the new claims are patentable over these references.

New claim 16 is independent, and the other new claims depend from claim 16. Claim 16 provides that "a first number of first contacts" connect a source region to a first conductor over the source region, and that "a second number of second contacts" connect the first conductor and a second conductor that is disposed over the first conductor. Claim 16 concludes by reciting that "the first number is more than twice as large as the second number." That is, the number of contacts connecting the source region and the first conductor over the source region (the "first contacts") is more than twice as large as the number of contacts connecting the first conductor with the second conductor (that is, the "second contacts"). Claim 16 has similar recitations for the drain region and the connections with conductors over the drain region.

The arrangement disclosed in the Ando reference is discussed in the "Background" portion of the present application, and is illustrated in Figures 4-A and 4-B of the drawings. As will be apparent from Figure 4-B, in particular, Ando alternates between first and second contacts. Consequently, the number of first contacts in Ando is not "more than twice as large" as the number of second contacts. The alternating nature of Ando's contacts is also apparent from the Figure of the Ando reference that is reproduced alongside the English summary of the reference.

As Figure 2 of the Narita reference shows, Narita also teaches alternating between first and second contacts (or third or fourth contacts).

Since neither Narita nor Ando suggests that the number of first contacts should be "more than twice as large" as the number of second contacts, in accordance with claim 16 of the present application, it is respectfully submitted that this would not be suggested by the references in combination, either. Nor do the references, alone or in combination, suggest the similar

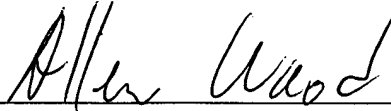
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CONCLUSION

Since the remaining claims that have been rejected depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, they are patentable along with their independent claims, and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Allen Wood
Registration No. 28,134
VENABLE
P.O. Box 34385
Washington, D.C. 20043-9998
Telephone: (202) 962-4800
Telefax : (202) 962-8300

AW/SJB
#263344

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